

Copyright Guidelines

Copyright is a form of protection given to the authors or creators of “original works of authorship,” including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic and other intellectual works. What that means is that, as the author of the work, you alone have the right to do any of the following or to let others do any of the following:

- make copies of your work;
- distribute copies of your work;
- perform your work publicly (such as for plays, film, dances or music);
- display your work publicly (such as for artwork, or stills from audiovisual works, or any material used on the Internet or television); and
- make “derivative works” (including making modifications, adaptations or other new uses of a work, or translating the work to another media).

In general, it is illegal for anyone to do any of the things listed above with a work created by you without your permission, but there are some exceptions and limitations to your rights. One major limitation is the doctrine of “Fair Use.”

Copyright law in the United States is embodied in federal laws enacted by Congress. The current copyright law, the Copyright Act of 1976 (as amended), is codified in Title 17 of the U.S. Code.

What is protected by copyright?

- literary works (which includes computer software);
- musical works, including any accompanying words;
- dramatic works, including any accompanying music;
- pantomimes and choreographic works;
- pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works;
- motion pictures and other audiovisual works;
- sound recordings; and
- architectural works.

Not everything is protected by copyright law. The following are categories of things not protected:

- Ideas, procedures, methods, systems, processes, concepts, principles, discoveries, or devices, (but written or recorded descriptions, explanations, or illustrations of such things are protected copyright);
- Titles, names, short phrases, and slogans; mere listings of ingredients or contents (but some titles and words might be protected under trademark law if their use is associated with a particular product or service);
- Works that are not fixed in a tangible form of expression, such as an improvised speech or performance that is not written down or otherwise recorded;
- Works consisting entirely of information that is commonly available and contains no originality (for example, standard calendars, standard measures and rulers, lists or tables compiled from public documents or other common sources); and
- Works by the US government.

Fair Use

- The exclusive rights of the copyright owner are not unlimited. The copyright law establishes some limitations on these rights. One of the most important limitations on the exclusive rights is the doctrine of "Fair Use." The "Fair Use" doctrine allows limited copying of copyrighted works for educational and research purposes. The copyright law provides that reproduction "for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research" is not an infringement of copyright.

(All information from <http://www.copyrightkids.org>)

Multimedia Editing

Image, audio and video editing software is widely available for either free or minimal cost. Therefore, anyone with a little computer know-how can modify existing multimedia and or create new multimedia from the comfort of their home.

Distributing these files is easily done with quickly built websites, file-sharing software and social networking sites.

Benefits:

- Allows individuals and businesses the ability to create their own advertising media without having to hire someone to do it for them;
 - One can create and print flyers, business cards, brochures, letterhead and other custom forms of print media
 - One can create and publish their own website
- One can create their own music and/or videos and distribute them over the World Wide Web for anyone to view so they can "get their name out."

Negatives:

- Allows individuals to create visual media depicting scenarios that never existed, which can be used to deface someone's character; ruining careers, college options and relationships
- Allows anyone to easily steal, modify and distribute copyrighted material
- Potential to lower the value of artistic works because "novice" artists can cheaply create digital works of art

File-Sharing Software

Programs like Kazza, Limewire, and Bit-torrent allow users to share files with anyone all over the world with Internet access.

Benefits:

- One can record their own music and freely distribute it using a file-sharing program to quickly gain interest in their music

Negatives:

- Piracy of copyrighted music and videos has become a major problem

Issues:

- Users are being prosecuted for piracy
- Universities may be held accountable for students using university Internet access to download copyrighted music and videos